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Agenda item 118
Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Letter dated 30 August 1999 from the Chairman of the Committee on Contributions addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to refer to General Assembly resolution 53/36 G, in which, among other provisions, the General Assembly requested the Committee on Contributions to consider the request of Georgia for exemption under Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations as contained in document A/C.5/53/65, as a matter or priority, taking into account the views expressed by Member States, and to transmit its views, also as a matter of priority, to the General Assembly, to the extent possible, before the end of its fifty-third session.

In this connection, the Committee on Contributions undertook an in-depth review at its fifty-ninth session of the procedural aspects of the consideration of requests for exemption under Article 19 of the Charter, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/36 C. The results of that review are reflected in section IV.A of the Committee's report, as contained in document A/54/11 and also attached to document A/C.5/53/64.

Among the issues considered by the Committee was the problem of timing related to requests for exemption under Article 19 that are received after the Committee's regular session. In that connection, the Committee recalled that the General Assembly had decided to request the Committee on Contributions to hold special sessions on a number of occasions, although such sessions take some time to organize and have financial implications for the Organization. Among other options, the Committee concluded that technical and practical issues made meeting through video- or tele-conferencing impractical at present. As regards the possibility of my seeking the views of members of the Committee by correspondence, the Committee concluded that any recommendations or advice emerging from such a process would not constitute a decision of the Committee since that requires a meeting of the Committee. It also noted that consultation by correspondence can be time-consuming and does not allow for the interaction and questioning that form a regular part of the Committee's consideration of requests for exemption under Article 19.

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Members of the Committee on Contributions have been informed of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 53/36 G, and have been provided with records of related meetings.

The Committee will consider the Assembly's request at its next scheduled meeting, which is its sixtieth session, to be held in New York from 5 to 30 June 2000. At that time, it will certainly consider, as a matter of priority, the request of Georgia, as mandated by the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) David **Etuket**
Chairman
Committee on Contributions